

THE BAPTIST Record

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Natchez church trumpets state missions

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor



SPECIAL INSERT
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STATE MISSIONS OFFERING

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Lots of people have impressive rock gardens, but few are as special as the rock garden at First Church, Natchez. That's because the rocks comprising this particular garden are brought back by members who participate in the church's many far-flung mission trips each year.

There are now quite a few rocks in the garden, and this summer's additions include specimens from the church's mission trips to Bolivia, Maryland, Colorado, and Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko. The church also sponsored a mission trip to Mobile, Ala.

Each rock is carefully lettered with the location and date of the particular mission trip that resulted in its relocation to Natchez. Church staffers and members alike point to the rock garden as symbolic of the church's deep, longstanding commitment to Kingdom work.

The church obviously believes Kingdom work starts at home, having upped their gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering (MLSMO) by 120% in only one year — tops in percentage increase among the 2100 Mississippi Baptist churches.

"The heartbeat of Mississippi Baptists is missions and evangelism, and we believe there's plenty of work to be done right here in our state," said Bill Hurt, the church's pastor for two years.

Hurt was quick to point out that other mission offerings supported by Southern Baptists are also important, such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. The church has a strong history of supporting those offerings as well as MLSMO, Hurt said.

However, the pastor referred to Song of Solomon 1:6, in which the writer openly laments neglecting his vineyard. "We shouldn't neglect our own vineyard, which is Mississippi," he pointed out.

Dan Wynn, a church staffer for 22 years currently serving as minister of education and administration, said construction mission trips over the past two years to Central Hills



SOLID AS A ROCK — First Church, Natchez, pastor Bill Hurt (left), joins Dan Wynn (center), minister of education and administration at the church, and longtime church member Paul Green in inspecting the garden maintained at the church for rock specimens brought back from the church's far-flung mission trips. The rock held by Wynn represents multiple construction mission trips to a destination close to home — Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Retreat — Mississippi Baptists' Royal Ambassadors campground — transformed the team members who participated.

"I believe those mission trips led to a greater awareness among our church members about missions in our own state. I know that the team members returned with a sense of ownership in the work they had contributed," Wynn said.

An interim pastorate at the church by David Michel, associate executive director for missions strategy at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

(MBCB), also opened many church members' eyes to the importance of state missions, Wynn said. Michel's responsibilities at the board include stewardship awareness and promotion.

Paul Green, a longtime deacon and church member for 50 years, credits Hurt with also stoking the mission fires at the southwest Mississippi church.

"He has done an excellent job of getting young people involved in the mission trips," Green said.

The church has adopted a plan to get every church mem-

ber involved in missions through their Sunday School classes. Church leaders have done that by widening the scope of a mission project to more than just the people who will go on the mission trip.

Sunday School classes, Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action (GAs), and other church groups help prepare for the mission trips, often collecting and packaging enormous amounts of supplies needed for the trips. Everyone has a role.

Green also said generous offerings allowed the church to become debt-free several years ago, and he believes that brought about a unified vision for missions among church members.

"There are so many good, missions-minded people in this church," Green said.

Hurt highlighted several aspects that he believes have contributed to the church's high degree of state missions commitment.

"First, the church has several members who serve on MBCB trustee boards, advisory committees, and in other positions. That has led to a greater understanding and love of state missions.

"Secondly, Mississippi Baptists are not in a state of turmoil. When we look at MLSMO, we see focused support for ministry in our home state.

"Lastly, the church subscribes to traditional Southern Baptist missions education programs. We sent 20 GAs this summer to Camp Garaywa (Mississippi Baptists' state GA campground in Clinton).

"When children come back to the church excited about missions, it really makes a difference," Hurt said.

Hurt said First Church has maintained a solid giving base and has seen a sizable increase in baptisms so far this year. He believes committed missions support has played a big part in those positive reports.

"We've had a good church year. I believe all of this goes hand-in-hand," he said.

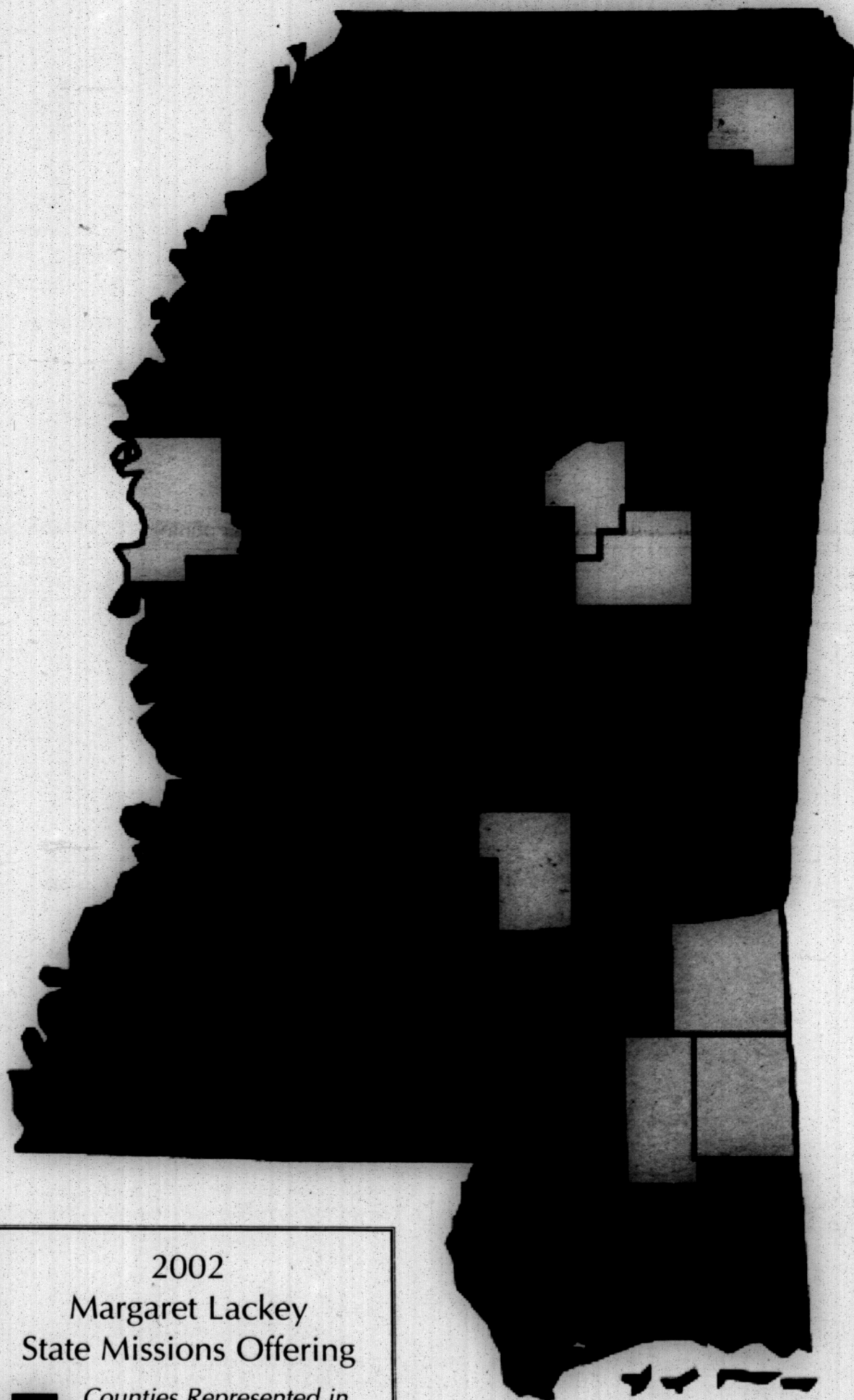
As plans for the church's 2003 missions program are being finalized, continued strong support for Mississippi missions is virtually assured at First Church, Natchez.

"Our people have great expectations. It becomes a way of life and a way of giving," Hurt said.



MISSISSIPPI
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MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST STATE MISSIONS



2002
Margaret Lackey
State Missions Offering

■ Counties Represented in
Top Ten Lists

Summer holds special missions meaning for BSU director

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

As a former missionary, Karen Ivy had already seen a slice of the world before she embarked on her recent mission trip to the Far East. However, this trip will hold remembrances for a lifetime for one special reason — the people she met who were so eager to hear the Gospel.

Ivy, in her fourth year as director of the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at Holmes Community College in Goodman, was able to make the eight-week trip thanks to gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering (MLSMO). Funds from the missions mobilization section of the offering were used to assist BSU leaders in arranging their summer mission trips.

Ivy had the opportunity to meet many residents of countries closed to traditional missionary efforts, especially college-age students. The countries are not listed here due to the sensitive nature of the work underway in many of the locations.

"So many people in these countries just light up when they find out you're an American. They're so excited to see you. They want to know everything

you can tell them about America and American culture, despite their governments' official anti-American pronouncements," said Ivy, a member of First Church, Lexington.

"So many people in the world have an insatiable appetite for anything American, and that alone opens up many opportunities

ways she could not have encountered at home in Mississippi. "In so many instances, our impressions of other countries and cultures are so incorrect."

Ivy said she returned to Mississippi with two main ideas. "I thought about how I want to share the Gospel with as many people as possible —

especially students — and how I want people to know what they're really like over there and how much they need the Gospel. I want to encourage people to go.

"The trip also caused me to look at my own ministry and realize how few barriers I have here in the United States. It made me feel that there are no barriers I can't overcome in my ministry," she said.

"I am so appreciative for the opportunity to go. I am grateful for the gifts to MLSMO that made the trip possible.

"If you look at that region of the world where I was with your own eyes, the task seems insurmountable. Looking through the eyes God gives us, you see that he is working in amazing ways in spite of all the barriers. I am grateful to have been a part of God's work over there," she said.



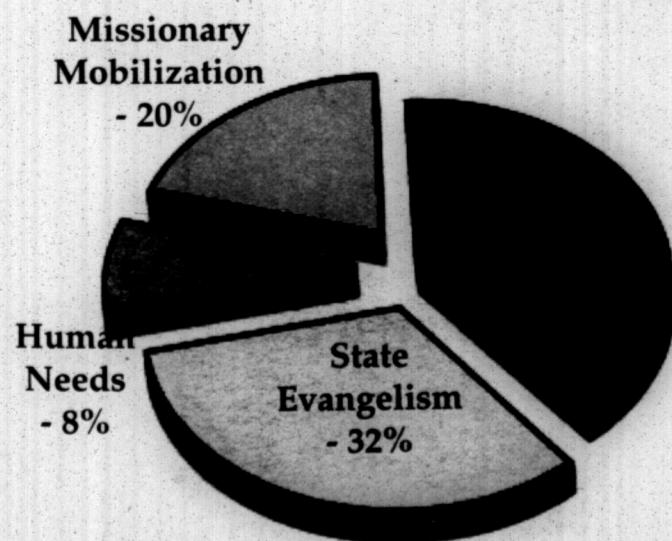
FAR FROM HOME — Karen Ivy (rear), Baptist Student Union director at Holmes Community College in Goodman, poses with new friends in an unnamed Muslim country during her recent mission trip sponsored by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. God is "working in amazing ways in spite of all the barriers," she said. (BR special photo)

to share the Gospel even in countries where doing so is not allowed. I had many opportunities to share," she said.

In addition to her sojourns to closed countries, Ivy also served several weeks as an assistant to the International Mission Board's student mobilization coordinator for Southeast Asia and Oceania.

Ivy said the mission trip opened her eyes to the world in

Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering 2003 - Budget Allocations



State Evangelism (32%) - \$475,000

- Church Planting (20%) - \$300,000
- Language/Ethnic (1%) - \$10,000
- Criminal Justice (2%) - \$35,000
- International Collegiate Ministry (1%) - \$10,000
- Associational Missions Projects (8%) - \$120,000

Missionary Mobilization (20%) - \$300,000

- Volunteer Ministry Assistance (20%) - \$300,000

Retreat Ministries (40%) - \$600,000

- Camp Garaywa (20%) - \$300,000
- Central Hills (20%) - \$300,000

Human Needs (8%) - \$125,000

- Disaster Relief (3%) - \$50,000
- Pastoral Benevolence (2%) - \$30,000
- Christian Women's Job Corp (2%) - \$30,000
- Literacy (1%) - \$15,000

TOTAL BUDGET : \$1.5 Million

English language courses offered in Amory

By Tim Nicholas
Staff Writer

Amory, Mississippi, a town of 7,000 people in the eastern part of the state, has become an international doorway for ministry.

Since last November, a total of 32 internationals from seven countries have been enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program offered by First Church, Amory. Church members became involved

because the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) offered teacher training and provided leader and student materials from funds given through the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering (MLSMO).

The 2002 state mission offering has \$15,000 in its budget for literacy and ESL training. This year, six churches or associations have had training in ESL.

"God has prepared us to meet a lot of different needs," said Joyce Webb, director of the ESL ministry at First Church, Amory.

"We found out right away that teaching English was only a small fraction of the ministry here. We have met emotional needs, financial needs, physical needs, and legal needs," she said.

As a matter of fact, the program has blossomed into much more than rote classroom learning. The program's volunteers have provided furniture for the students. They have taken sick children to the doctor. On each student's birthday, the volunteers give the lucky student a party.

Jenny Harrington, one of the ESL teachers, is a former Southern Baptist Journeyman (two year assignment) to

Brazil. She was planning to attend Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth this fall.

"There's a lot of joy in teaching ESL," said Harrington. "It's just something that I know God has led to my heart."

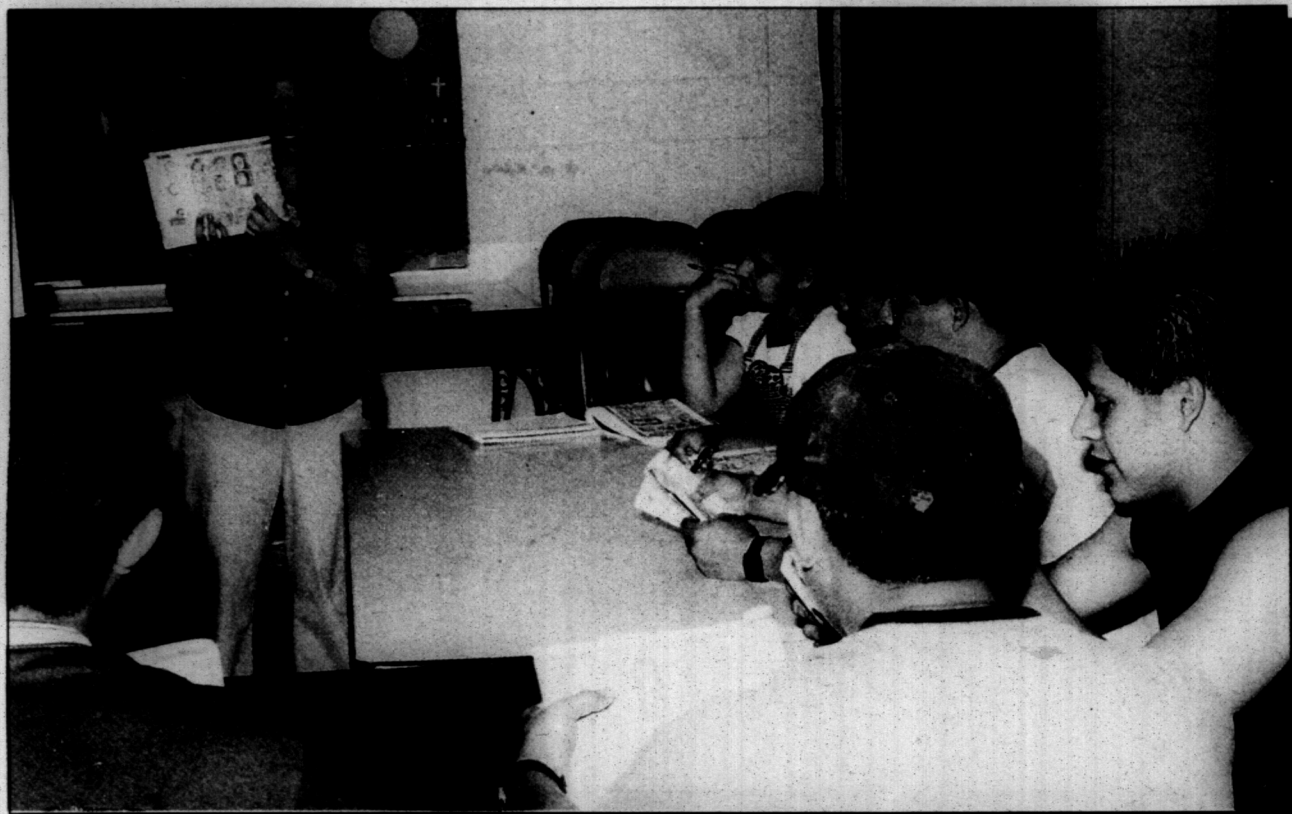
Allen Simpson, pastor of First Church, Amory, pointed to the influence of the Holy Spirit on people's lives at his church.

"They've always been a giving church and what we're trying to do now is become a doing church," he said.

Said Joyce Webb of the ESL ministry: "God prepared our hearts to meet the needs of these people."

For more information on ESL ministries, contact Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union consultant Paula Smith at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3336 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 336. E-mail: psmith@mbcb.org.

The just-released Vessels videomagazine contains a segment on the First Church, Amory, ESL program. For more information on the videomagazine, contact MBCB Communication Services at the above address. Telephone: (601) 292-3378 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 378. E-mail: jchen@mbcb.org.



Jenny Harrington, a member of First Church, Amory, teaches an ESL class at the church to recent immigrants seeking to learn their new country's language. This class, one of several at the church, begins after 9 p.m., when most of the students get off work at a nearby restaurant. (BR photo by Tim Nicholas)

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VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL NEWS

Strong Hope, Wesson, recently held VBS with enrollment of 100 with a daily average of 76. The director was Penny Martin. David Crowe is pastor.

VBS was held June 3-7 at **Friendship Church, Ecu**, with 14 accepting Jesus as their Savior.

Steep Hollow Church, Poplarville, held its backyard VBS from July 8-12 at the home of Richard and Ruth Russ, director of VBS, in Kiln. The enrollment was 77 with 17 decisions. VBS was held June 17-21 with enrollment of 239 and two decisions. Shannon Marshall is pastor.

Holly Springs, Lincoln Association, held its first VBS in 35 years on June 27-29. There were 39 enrolled with an average of 38 attending each evening. Ann Young from Easthaven Church in Lincoln County helped to supply the crafts. Rhonda Smith assisted Tammy Knight in directing. Glenn McInnis is pastor.



VBS Participants of Friendship Church, Ecu



VBS Participants of Holly Springs Church, Lincoln Association

Richmond Church, Tupelo, held VBS July 31-August 1 with an average attendance of 116. Clay Anthony is pastor.

Sardis Church, Philadelphia, set a goal of 40 for VBS. Since the goal was reached with 44 enrolled, Michael Wells,

pastor, was slined by the children and youth.



Michael Wells, pastor of Sardis Church



VBS Participants of Richmond Church, Tupelo

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(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

Five women that form the WMU of **Fayette Church, Fayette**, have been a major reason why their small church in number have led to over \$30,000 in mission giving since 1997.



WMU of Fayette Church, Fayette

They are (from left) Edna King, Elaine Aldridge, Ann Marie Anderson, Barbara Young, and Henrietta Miller, WMU director. Eddie King is pastor.

Twenty-one adults and youth of **Mt. Olive Church, Baldwin**, traveled to Fairhaven Church, Middletown, Delaware, for Missions 2002. They held three Backyard Bible Clubs (BYBC) and handed out fliers



Youth of Mt. Olive Church, Baldwin

about the church and BYBC, and gave water to motorists on Main Street. Pictured (from left, first row) are Rhonda Lansdell, Marsha Price, Allison Dugger, Kim Chism, Meatta Wenner, Kayla

Watson; (second row) Brittany Pittman, Alex Croteau, Lane and Mark Cartwright, John Burns; (back row) Freida and J. T.

Cartwright, Betty and Billy Roberts, and Barrett Loague.

Plainway Church, Laurel, recently honored Edyth White, Ouida Dearman, and Bobbie Sullivan with plaques and certificates of appreciation. They have over 85 years of service to the church as nursery coordinators and Sunday School teachers.

Bible Drill participants of New Life Church, McLain, pictured (from left, front row) are Brittany Havard, Ashley Dunham, Korey Williams; (second row) Ann Breland, Bridgett Hillman, Scott Sellers; (third row) Jerrod Skidmore, Andrew Sellers, and Billy Jack Dickson. Not pictured is Sandy Linder.



White, Dearman, and Sullivan

Perry County Association's annual GA/Acteen camp was held May 29-31 at Paul B. Johnson's State Park. There were 65 girls in attendance. Six girls made decisions for Christ and five girls rededicated their lives. The camp is sponsored by the associational WMU.

Faith Church, Jackson, will celebrate its 5th anniversary on Sept. 8 at 10:30 a.m. Special music will be provided by Patton and Dana Rice and the Faith choir. A program will be presented by the Mercy River Boys Quartet at 5 p.m. For additional information, call (601) 368-2983.

Longview Church, Pontotoc, will present The Spokesmen in concert Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. Johnny Sykes is pastor. For additional information, call (662) 489-5733.



Bible Drill Participants of New Life Church, McLain



GAs & Acteens of Perry County Association

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Clifton

Gwen Clifton of DeKalb will debut her new album at Bay Springs Church, Porterville, on Sept. 1 at 6:30 p.m. Clifton, a paraplegic, has surrendered her life to Christian Ministry through singing. For additional information, call Clifton at (601) 743-5305 or (601) 743-4524.

Old Union Church, Lee County, recently honored three of its veteran members for their service to their church and country. Pictured (from left) are Henry Flynn, Pete Simmons,

and Jacob Mallory Sr. Kenneth Kelly is pastor.

Bo Morgan of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, received a Bible on April 21 for completing his God and County and his Eagle Scott Award. Pictured (from left) are David Hamilton, pastor; and Morgan.

Oakland Heights Church, Meridian, recently ordained Neal Grogan as deacon. Pictured with Grogan (left) is Mike Russell (right), pastor of Oakland Heights Church.



Mazie Dye

Springfield Church, Morton, recently presented Mazie Dye with a plaque of appreciation for her many years of service

as church secretary. The special occasion was her 80th birthday. In addition to serving as church secretary, she teaches adult ladies class and serves as church treasurer and prayer coordinator.

Recent recipients of Anna Lynn Osborne Memorial Scholarships established through the Mississippi

youths are members of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson. Pictured (from left) are Nell Osborne, Koerber, Fioretti, and John Osborne.

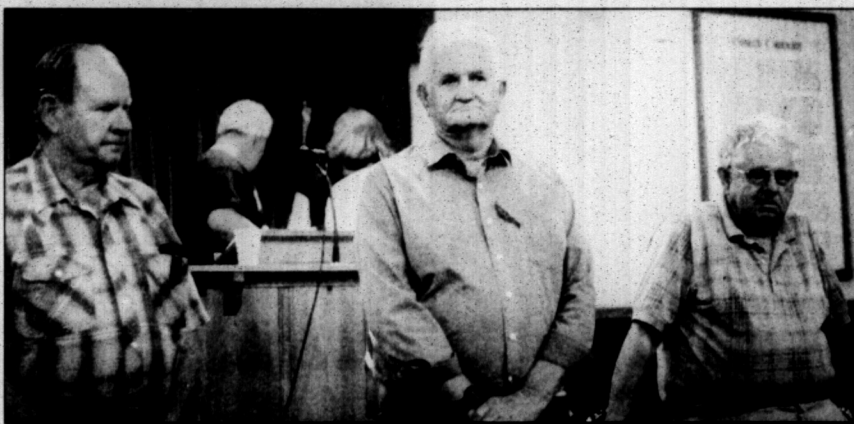


Grogan and Russell

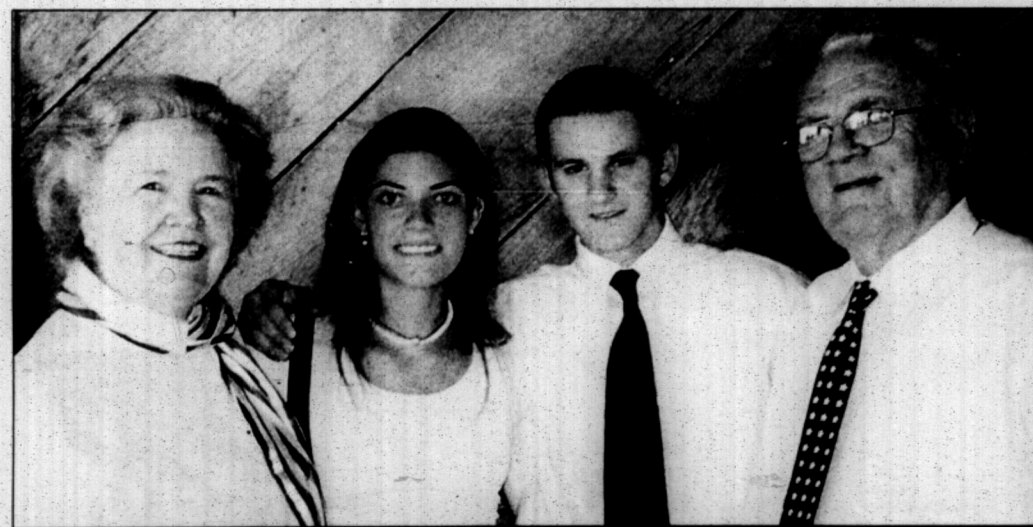


Hamilton and Morgan

Baptist Foundation are **Katie Koerber**, graduate of Jackson Academy, to Mississippi College, and **Brian Fioretti**, graduate of Madison Ridgeland Academy, to Holmes Jr. College. Both



Flynn, Simmons, and Mallory



Nell Osborne, Koerber, Fioretti, and John Osborne

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LONGVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH/Pontotoc - 119th Anniversary/Homecoming is September 21-22. Saturday's Schedule is 5:30 pm Praise service, 6:00 pm meal, then 7:00 pm "Time of Reflection and Celebration" featuring several former Pastors, staff, and families. Sunday's guest speaker is George Johnson. Johnny Sykes is pastor.

Visit the MBCB on the web at www.mbc.org

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NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH is looking for the person God has selected to serve as minister of education and music. Education and experience a must. Salary and benefits determined by education and experience level. Please send resume to: Search Committee, New Hope Baptist Church, 508 New Hope Church Road, Foxworth, MS 39483.

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH is looking for a Part-time Youth Minister. Please send resume to: Search Committee, New Hope Baptist Church, 508 New Hope Church Road, Foxworth, MS 39483.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH in North

Jones County, Laurel, MS is seeking a full-time senior pastor. If interested, please contact Dr. Charles Boone, chairman, Pastor Search Committee at 199 Lake Como Road, Laurel, MS 39443 or phone (601) 428-5244 or phone the church office at (601) 425-4276.

FLOWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please send resume to 1649 Old Fannin Road, Flowood, MS 39232, Attn: Personnel Department.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God Is Holy

I Chronicles 16:7-12, 15-17,
25-29, 34-35

By Gene Neal

I Chronicles 16 records one of the most beautiful of all of David's psalms. This one appears again in Psalm 105. The motivation for the psalm was the joyous occasion of the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. In their way of thinking, the ark represented the actual presence of almighty God. To be in his presence gave them more than enough reason to worship, as it should today! In this psalm of thanksgiving and worship, David uses many expressions (give thanks, sing to him, glory in his name, look to the Lord, remember, ascribe to the Lord, bring an offering, cry out) to describe the act of worship which he refers to in verse 29

when he says "...worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness" (NIV).

Today's postmodern mind would ask several questions about David's statement. Why worship God? Why should I believe that he is holy and what exactly does that mean? These are good questions as a proper view of God is absolutely necessary to be able to worship. Today's worldview would see God as a doting grandfatherly figure or as a dictatorial tyrant waiting to punish. Few, even in today's church, would see God as David describes him in this beautiful explanation of his holiness.

First, David points out that God can be worshiped because He is incomparably great. Verses 7-12 are simply a verbal



Neal

expression of what they had already done in the first six verses of the chapter. This is a great reminder to us that worship is a verb, something we DO and SAY. This lesson from the people of God shows us that worship should be expressed in our lives first giving the worshiper something to sing, shout, or talk about. David could have never voiced such wonderful worship without first acting out his praise. The phrase "wonderful acts" in verse 9 refers to acts that are beyond human capability. David is reinforcing the idea that God is incomparably great. Verse 10 gives us another look at the high view of God held by David when he says "holy name." In the Hebrew way of thinking, a name represented one's character; thus, David is saying that God's very character is holy. His greatness could be enough reason to worship him; but David gives three more reasons to say that God is holy and worthy of the wor-

ship of his creation.

Next, David says God can be worshiped because he is eternally faithful. David reminds the people of the covenant promises of God with his people and the truth and dependability of those promises. God's character will never change! In a day when society tries to redefine truth and erase absolutes from our vocabulary, it is refreshing to hear that God is and always will be faithful, true, and unchanging.

Thirdly, David says that God is worthy of worship because he is exclusively God, the one and only. Some have become confused with verses 25 and 26 as they mention other gods. The Hebrew word for god in this case is *elil* which literally means "a thing of naught." In other words, these other gods are not gods at all. In fact, they don't even exist. The words David was led to use make a comparison between an actual, living Being and something that has no substance. Again, we find a refreshingly

relevant lesson that speaks to today's outcry for tolerance of all religious doctrine and deities. David reminds all who will hear the truth that the God of the Bible is the only true God and, for that reason, should be worshiped.

Lastly, David's psalm says that God is our only Savior as verse 35 speaks of His saving power. God is indeed holy, clearly taught by the fact that He is incomparably great, eternally faithful, exclusively God, and only Savior. He is worthy of David's praise! He is worthy of the praise of the children of Israel! He is worthy of our praise and worship for all of the same reasons. The final words of verse 36 adequately summarize the emotion of that service of worship. As we think about the holiness of our wonderful, personal, majestic, approachable God, we would do well to summarize our own worship in the same way. "Then all the people said 'Amen' and 'Praise the Lord'" (NIV).

Neal is pastor of First Church, Quitman.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Recognizing Real Life

John 1:1-18

By Ginger Morris Caughman

"Do you know who I am?" The question hangs in the air. You see someone who looks familiar but you can't recall the name. The dreaded question is asked and you stand there embarrassed. You can't remember. You decide to try honesty. "Help me, I know I'm supposed to." Finally they laugh and tell you.

A humbling encounter. Physically failing to recognize someone you haven't seen in a long time is a common human experience. But do you have spiritual eyes to recognize Jesus around you each day? As a Christian do you live the real life in Christ? Just perhaps, you are reading these words and do not know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Help is always available in Scripture for any need in your

life. For the next quarter of Sunday School lessons, we will explore the theme "Real Life in the Real World" through a study of the Gospel of John.

The synoptic Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the historical biography of Jesus. But John's account tells the spiritual story of God's love from the glory of heaven into the beginning of earth's time and back out into eternity. Take time to enjoy reading this beautiful book several times in the next few months.

You may know in your mind that only Jesus is the source of real life. Will you allow God to lead you into a deeper experience of truth? Decide how you can individually show love and obedience to Christ. These lessons will seek to help you



Caughman

truly recognize the abundant life Jesus promised.

1. Real Life Is Here. Read John 1:1-5.

Jesus Christ is God and is responsible for the creation of everything. John states again in 1 John 5:20 who Jesus is and who we are in him. We can have real life through the Word of God, Jesus Christ!

2. Real Life is for All. Read John 1:6-8.

"He must increase and I must decrease." John the Baptist's purpose and his ministry were to prepare the way for Jesus and to point people to Him. God's desire is to save all people. See verse 7, "...that through him all... might believe." Real life through Jesus Christ is offered to all people.

Have you visited Carlsbad Caverns? After the tour is led deep into the earth, the lights are turned out. What an immediate contrast. It's the darkest dark I've ever experienced. Choosing Christ gives you spiritual light in every situation of

darkness for he offers to all his life, light, and truth.

3. Real Life Belongs to God's Children. John 1:9-14.

I was taught as a young girl to memorize John 1:12, a good verse to hold in your mind and use in sharing Christ with others. The verse gained new meaning to me after an experience while touring Israel. Our tour guide, whose name was Israel, had initially stated that he was not a Christian. Near the end of the tour I had opportunity to talk with him.

"Thank you for all you've taught me about the land where Jesus walked on earth," I said. "You know so much about Bible lands. How can you know so much about Jesus yet not believe him?"

"You have to understand," he replied. "I was born a Jew. Being Jewish is a tradition, a military thing, not a religion. Judaism is not a faith for me."

Much later back at home, I noticed a new meaning to the verse I had memorized years before and the verse in front of it, John 1:11. God sent Jesus

to earth, born in Jewish skin but the Jews did not accept him. Jews today are still waiting for the Messiah to come. But verse 12 continues: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God!" The phrase "the right to become" translates a Greek word that means power or authority. We are children of God when we are his and he is ours. Trusting Jesus gives us real life and the power of God to enable us to do his will.

4. Real Life Brings Us Blessings. John 1:15-18.

As the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ blesses believers by revealing God's grace and faithfulness. Jesus Christ blesses Christians with real life and reveals God's attributes of grace and truth.

The world did not recognize nor receive Jesus Christ. Do you? It's your choice!

Caughman is a member of First Church, Magee.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

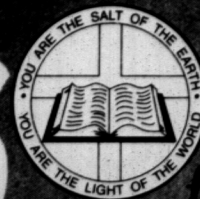
Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES



for Christian Living

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GAMBLING - THE WORST IS YET TO COME

By Jimmy Porter, Executive Director
Christian Action Commission

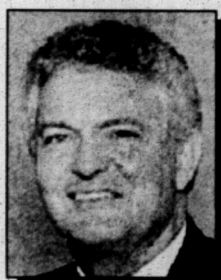
"Thirty years ago, gambling was illegal in most states and in general considered to be a vice contrary to the American work ethic. Serious gamblers had to travel to Nevada for casino play; states had not yet plunged into lottery mania. Today, however, 29 casinos operate in Mississippi, 14 in New Jersey, and 429 in Nevada; another 250 casinos operate on Indian reservations; and nearly 100 riverboat casinos are chartered in six states. All but three states have legalized some form of gambling. Pari-mutuel gambling, primarily horse racing, is legal in 42 states; casinos are licensed in 28 states; and the lottery is played in 37 states plus the District of Columbia" (Dr. Timothy A. Kelly, "Gambling Backlash: Time For a Moratorium on Casino and Lottery Expansion," Family Research Council).

Dr. Kelly, research fellow at George Mason Institute for Public Policy, derived his information from the National Gambling Impact Study Commission of 1999. Therefore, his numbers are 3-4 years old and all have substantially increased. The saddest part is that the worst is yet to come. No longer does a gambler need to fly to Vegas to gamble. All that is necessary is a computer, internet access, and a desire to give your money away.

According to International Gaming & Wagering Business (IGWB), internet gambling sites have grown from 700 in 1999 to 1,800 in 2001. Also, approximately 10 million people enjoy at least irregular online casino gambling, twice as many as just two years ago. It is estimated that U.S. players will lose about \$322 million dollars this year alone on internet gambling even though it is illegal for U.S. citizens to participate in online gambling.

The potential of e-gambling is being explored by financial institutions and individual investors. According to IGWB (August 2002), online gambling is one of the few revenue-producing

online industries. Internet gambling's 1.3 billion dollars in real revenue makes it the second most profitable industry online following the cyber-sex industry. In 2000, online gambling turnover was \$11.5 billion dollars with 26% originating from the United States. By the end of 2002, it is estimated that \$21.5 billion will have been wagered online with 42% of all U.S. wagers being placed on online casinos (IGWB, August 2002, p. 6). The biggest increase in any form of gambling last year was internet gambling which recorded a 36.1% increase.



Porter

With the proliferation of internet gambling, more and more individuals will become problem gamblers. Howard Shaffer, director of the Harvard University division on addiction, predicts that youth gambling may become more of a societal problem than drugs (Mississippi Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling, Vol. VII, Issue 1). Tom Gallagher, CEO of Park Place Entertainment, says he is not necessarily opposed to internet wagering. But, he has told various newspapers that the gambling industry has spent an enormous amount of time, money, and energy to keep children out of their casinos. So he states, "I'm not so sure we ought to bring gambling into our homes" (Ibid., pg. 2).

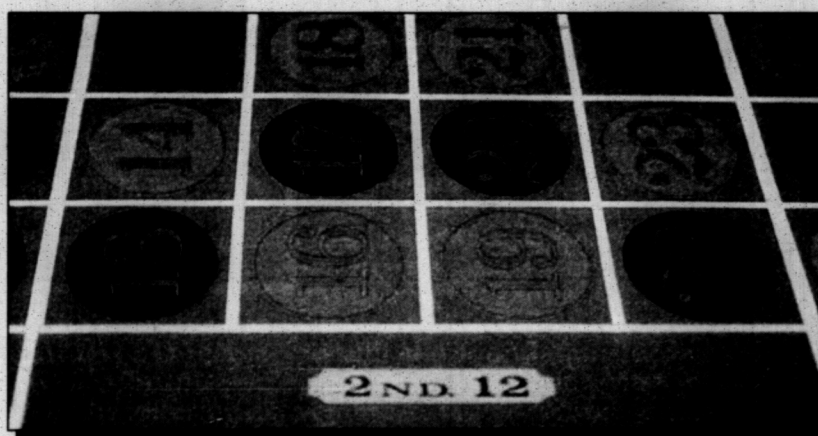
Gambling is on virtually every college campus. So when one adds computers and internet access, the number of gamblers and problem gamblers will skyrocket. It is estimated that by 2005, 91% of U.S. households will have internet access. Thus, gambling becomes accessible by anyone, anytime, anywhere, via the internet.

Internet gambling, like internet pornography, has been perceived as a threat to children and adolescents precisely because it is so easily available in the home and in college dorms. No one uses the internet more than America's youth, and no one is more vulnerable to its temptation. Now,



every parent has to reckon with the fact that commercial gambling is available in the dens and bedrooms of their homes via the internet (Dr. Timothy Kelly, article in Family Research Council).

Dr. Kelly also suggests that internet gambling can be especially destructive for those who are vulnerable to addictions since it provides high-speed instant gratification together with the anonymity of the home setting. A Harvard researcher stated,



"As smoking crack cocaine changed the cocaine experience, I think electronics are going to change the way gambling is experienced." Therefore, electronic gambling will be all the more destructive and addictive.

Dr. Wayne Wickham, syndicated columnist, in an August 12, 2002, *Clarion Ledger* article writes, "Some states see gaming as a way out of budget woes." Then he adds, "Now this is a bad bet." Mr. Wickham uses Maryland as an example of a state seeking budget relief by putting slot machine gambling at the state's racetrack. He concludes his article by stating that the money legalized gambling dumps into the state's coffers is offset by the crime and social costs (divorce, job absenteeism and the ripple effects on children) the gaming industry generates.

The fact is that we must continue to oppose gambling and particularly the

expansion of gambling. As Mississippi Baptists we should pray daily for those we know that are beset with gambling problems. Also, it would be helpful if every church in our state would do some kind of emphasis on **Anti-Gambling Sunday, September 15, 2002**. If not on that day, any day of your church calendar would be welcome. We must continue to make known to our government officials that in Mississippi we oppose any effort to expand gambling.

Dr. Kelly summarizes the opinions of many when he suggests that it is time for policymakers to recognize that the rapid expansion of gambling is putting children and adolescents increasingly at risk and has led to a host of other negative social consequences that have yet to be adequately addressed. Legislators should declare a moratorium on gambling expansion and enact policies to break America's growing addiction to gambling. Dr. Kelly states, "The real question is: Do policymakers have the courage to act on behalf of the public good as opposed to the public treasury?"

If the Christian Action Commission can assist you in planning, promoting, or providing information for Anti-Gambling Sunday, September 15, 2002, please contact us at 1-800-748-1651 (toll free in Mississippi) or (601) 292-3329 or e-mail us at jporter@mbcb.org.

If you are interested in receiving Christian Action updates via the internet and will share this information with friends and your church, please e-mail us at rwood@mbcb.org. Include your name, address, phone number, and church name.

LifeWay offering 9-11 web site resource

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks last year, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention scrambled to provide information that church leaders needed to minister in a whole new world.

Now, a year later, LifeWay is returning to the Internet to further help people as they cope and plan to commemorate the 9/11 tragedy with a new website, www.lifeway.com/united-sunday, joining a previously announced North American Mission Board website, "Hope Remembering 9-11," at www.namb.net/911.

The LifeWay website, which went live Aug. 1, is designed to offer churches online helps as they plan worship services marking the anniversary of the attacks on America.

Resources include downloadable sermon and worship helps and community outreach options. The website also features information and resources to complement "United Through It All," a patriotic anthem of hope written by Randall Bayne, Michael Allen and Steve Mauldin, and published by LifeWay.

Additionally, Broadman & Holman, LifeWay's trade publishing division, is producing a special bulletin cover designed by artist Ron DiCianni. The artwork, "No Greater Love," is of firefighters, police officers and medical personnel, and it honors their service to America.

The covers are available at LifeWay Christian Stores. In Mississippi, those stores are located at 3800 N. Gloster in Tupelo; 6366 Ridgewood Court Drive in Jackson; and 15128 Crossroads Parkway in Gulfport.

"We just see it bubbling up," Jim Johnston, managing director of LifeWay's publishing services and multimedia area, said of the interest churches are showing in planning special Sept. 11 services. "It's a huge need of churches."

"Churches want to do something special for not only their own members, but for people who are outside and may be coming into the church seeking answers. We want to be a resource to help them realize the big dream of having really special, moving services on both Sept. 8 and 11."

Content on the website will be continually updated, Johnston said, as more resources and ideas become available. Additions, such as drama ideas and helps for Bible study or Sunday School lessons, already have been included among the links.

"A lot of churches won't take everything we have on the website and implement it, but we hope it will be an idea starter for them — a place where they can start to develop ideas for what they want to do on those days," Johnston said.

"We think there are probably

going to be some people who are seekers who will go to church on Sept. 8, and we want to provide something for churches to do community outreach," he added. "What we know is that Sept. 8, the

Baumgardner produced a leader's guide to accompany the book, both of which were distributed electronically to the Salvation Army, the North American Mission Board, and Southern Baptist associational counselors in New York.

Approximately 10,000 copies of the custom edition of the book were given to New York residents.

The United Sunday website and other LifeWay resources have provided an important service and resource to Christians following the Sept. 11 tragedies, Draper said.

"It is important for LifeWay to provide resources that every church can access," he said. "We must appropriately remember the events of Sept. 11 and move past a simply patriotic fervor to a real drawing near to God."

Draper said many churches don't have the financial resources to produce their own presentations and materials, making the Lifeway.com website even more valuable to those churches.

"What we have posted will open up wonderfully creative and effective resources to every church," Draper said.

"These resources will blend our need for patriotism, but also the necessity of prayer, repentance and calling on our nation to return to God," he pointed out.



Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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HIE YB LYHL ZBIL XB

DZ RDLY XB: LYB

MHLYBN YHLY IGL ABML

XB HAGIB; MGN D EG

HARHTZ LYGZB LYDISZ

LYHL FABHZZ YDX.

VGYI BDSYL: LRBILT-IDIB

Clue: H=A

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Genesis Four: Six

Point of Grace promoting 'Girls of Grace' events

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — After 11 years, seven albums, two Grammy nominations, seven Dove awards, and 25 number one songs, Point of Grace is fronting a new conference series called Girls of Grace.

The two-day conference events beginning this fall include praise and worship music, keynote speakers, teaching sessions with the members

of Point of Grace, fashion and makeup sessions, and a concert with Point of Grace and special guest Joy Williams — all with the goal of giving teenage girls a refreshed heart, a renewed self-confidence, and a better understanding of their daily walk with Christ.

"The whole image issue is such a place where teenagers walk, and our hope is that they start seeing who they are in Christ," group member Denise Jones said. "Our whole bottom line is to show who they are in Christ."

"Unless you spend time on a daily basis with him, it's so easy to give in to the world's viewpoint of who you should be. Our hope is that they really get to know what God thinks about them."

Jones, along with the other members of the group, Shelley Breen, Terry

Jones, and Heather Payne, realize they're still young enough that teenagers are listening to them but old enough that parents respect them and trust them with their children.

During the teaching sessions, Denise will talk about how to have discernment in dating situations, Shelley will discuss family relationships, Terry will talk about friendships and self-esteem and Heather will discuss a personal relationship with God.

The fashion show will instruct girls on how to dress in the latest styles while maintaining modesty. Point of Grace also will lead a panel discussion about how to dress while keeping godly principles in mind.

"We love to shop, and we know how hard it is to find cool clothes that are hip that aren't completely tacky and show way too much skin," Shelley said. "We want to help girls understand the signals they send when they dress like they do, and we want to give them practical tips about how they can dress modestly and still not feel like they're out of style."

"We want them to know they can dress in a godly manner — it is possible, it's just harder."

Point of Grace realizes that it's going to be difficult to compete with some of the role models Hollywood and the secular music industry offer girls today, but they won't rely on their own power to get girls' attention.

"My biggest prayer is that the Spirit of God is going to convict them," Denise said. "There is a world screaming at them 'This is the way your love life should be,' 'This is the way you should look,' 'This is the way you're successful, and there's power in that and power in control,' and it's going to be really hard to scream louder than that."

In addition to the conferences, girls will be able to purchase the Girls of Grace CD, which was fashioned as a soundtrack for the conferences. The album includes Point of Grace and other female artists such as Jaci Velasquez, Out of Eden, Joy Williams, Jennifer Deibler of FFH, Christy Nockels of Watermark, Rachael Lampa, and Nichole Nordeman.

The fall 2002 conference cities are Lakeland, Fla., Dallas, Denver, and Grand Rapids, Mich. Many more cities are planned for 2003.



POINT OF GRACE — (from left) Heather Payne, Denise Jones, Terry Jones, and Shelley Breen. (BP Photo)